

Can I See Some ID Please?: Voter Identification¹

This IPRO report compares voter identification (ID) requirements across states. The report examines the effects of voter ID laws on voter turnout.

Definitions

Photo ID Required: state law requires voters to present government issued, photo identification to election officials in order to vote.

Any Form of ID Required: state law requires voters to present any form of identification or government document with the voter's address and name to election officials in order to vote.

No Voter ID Requirements: state law does not require voters to show any form of identification to election officials in order to vote.

Overview

Many states implement laws that require voters to show identification to election officials prior to voting. Currently, eight states require a photo ID and 19 states require some form of identification. If the appropriate ID is not shown prior to voting, the voter must take alternative measures to vote, which vary by state.² Voter ID laws are intended to eliminate voter fraud and increase turnout.³

Iowa

Iowa currently has no voter ID requirements implemented prior to voting. Voters do not need to present any kind of identification in order to vote. A bill requiring voter identification passed through the Iowa House in 2011, but was rejected by the Iowa Senate.⁴

Costs and Benefits of Voter ID Laws

Costs

- The implementation process would cost Iowa around \$1.7-2 million annually.⁵ The implementation costs include educating voters about these new laws, providing free or inexpensive IDs, additional staff training, and extra provisional ballots.
- Average voters may not be able to cast their ballots because of ID complications. Voters with expired IDs, who have been recently married, or may have forgot their ID will have to take extra

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² "Voter ID: State Requirements." NCSL Home. National Conference of State Legislators. Web. 08 Mar. 2011. <<http://www.ncsl.org/default.aspx?tabid=16602>>.

³ "Supreme Court Upholds Voter ID Law." Msnbc.com. 28 Apr. 2008. Web. 08 Mar. 2011. <<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/24351798/ns/politics/>>.

⁴ Nelson, Andrew J. "Iowa Voter ID Plan Stymied." Omaha World-Herald. The Omaha World Herald, 2 Apr. 2011. Web. 11 Apr. 2011. <<http://www.omaha.com/article/20110402/NEWS01/704029858/1003>>.

⁵ Kromm, Chris. Report: N.C. Voter ID Law Could Cost State \$20 Million or More. www.southernstudies.org. The Institute for Southern Studies, 2 Feb. 2011. Web. 30 Mar. 2011.

<<http://www.southernstudies.org/ISS%20Cost%20NC%20Voter%20ID.pdf>>.

steps to vote. Studies have show only very strict voter ID laws have a significant negative correlation with turnout.⁶

- Voter ID laws may decrease turnout among the poor and ethnic minorities. Recent studies show strict voter ID laws have a significant negative correlation with turnout, especially among the uneducated.⁷ Minority voters are more likely to not have ID, forget to bring their ID, or cannot afford an ID, and therefore, are denied at the polls.

Benefits

- Voter ID laws may decrease fraudulent votes.⁸ Stricter identification procedures at the polls will make fraudulent votes less frequent.
- Strict laws can improve voter and public confidence.⁹ By asking for ID before voting and decreasing the possibility of voter fraud, proponents believe the voter trust in our election system may rise driving voter turnout up.¹⁰
- Free or cheap IDs provided by the state may give voters an extra benefit of voting. Free IDs may give minorities or lower income voters an incentive to vote at the polls.¹¹ Recent studies show that strict voter ID laws may not have significant effects on reducing a particular sub-groups' turnout level.¹²

Federal Action

The Help America Vote Act (HAVA) was in 2002. The HAVA requires all first-time voters that registered by mail and did not provide identification with their mail-in registration to present identification prior to voting. Acceptable forms include current photo ID, a utility bill, paycheck, or other government document with the name and address of the voter. In *Crawford versus Marion County Election Board* (2008), the United States Supreme Court ruled photo ID laws are “eminently reasonable” and that election fraud and inspiring voter confidence are legitimate goals of the law.^{13,14}

⁶ Alvarez, Michael. "The Effect of Voter Identification Laws on Turnout." California Institute of Technology. Division of the Humanities and Social Sciences California Institute of Technology, Oct. 2007. Web. <<http://jkatz.caltech.edu/research/files/wp1267.pdf>>.

⁷ Erikson, Robert S., and Lorraine C. Minnite. "Modeling Problems in the Voter Identification—Voter Turnout Debate." *Election Law Journal*. Columbia College, 2009. Web. 12 May 2011. <<http://www.columbia.edu/~rse14/erikson-minnite.pdf>>.

⁸ Stout, David. "Supreme Court Upholds Voter Identification Law in Indiana." *The New York Times*. 29 Apr. 2008. Web. Mar. 2011. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/29/washington/28cnd-scotus.html>>.

⁹ Alvarez, R. M., et al. *Survey of the Performance of American Elections: Final Report* (2008) Print.

¹⁰ Persily, Nathaniel. "Vote Fraud in the Eye of the Beholder: The Role of Public Opinion in the Challenge to Voter Identification Requirements." NELLCO Legal Scholarship Repository. Columbia Law School, 21 Feb. 2008. Web. <http://lsr.nellco.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1039&context=columbia_pllt&sei>.

¹¹ A Report on Photo ID for Voting Purposes. Rep. ISACA Photo ID Exploratory Committee, 25 Jan. 2011. Web. <http://www.iowaauditors.org/index_files/ISACAVoterIDReport020211final.pdf>.

¹² Alvarez, Michael. "The Effect of Voter Identification Laws on Turnout." California Institute of Technology. Division of the Humanities and Social Sciences California Institute of Technology, Oct. 2007. Web.

¹³ United States. 107th Congress. Help America Vote Act of 2002. 29 Oct. 2002. Web. 11 Apr. 2011. <<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-107publ252/pdf/PLAW-107publ252.pdf>>.

¹⁴ Stohr, Greg. "Bloomberg.com: News." Bloomberg - Business & Financial News, Breaking News Headlines. 8 Jan. 2008. Web. Apr. 2011. <<http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=washingtonstory>>.

State Action

No Voter ID Requirements: Illinois¹⁵

There are 23 states that do not require any kind of voter ID at the polls. Illinois does not extend their voter ID laws any further than HAVA mandates. If a first-time voter who did not provide identification with their mail-in registration does not bring ID to the polls, they may vote by provisional ballot.

Any Form of ID Requirement: Missouri

There are 19 states that require identification prior to voting. Missouri requires all of their voters to present a form of identification (i.e ID issued by Missouri, university or technical school ID, government document with the correct name and address, driver's license or state ID issued by another state) to election officials before voting. If voter fails to show identification, he or she may still vote if two supervising election judges, one from each major party, confirm they know the individual.¹⁶ Asking voters to show for a photo ID at the polls, instead of documentary ID, has not been found to have significant effects on public trust either.¹⁷

Photo ID Required: Indiana¹⁸

There are eight states, which require photo identification in order to vote. In 2005, Indiana adopted photo voter ID laws. Over the next four years, Indiana spent \$12.2 million dollars implementing the policy.¹⁹ Since 2006, Indiana has required their voters to possess a photo ID issued by Indiana or the United States Federal Government in order to vote. If the voter does not have a photo ID, he or she may vote by returning to the election board the Monday after the election and either show photo ID or fill out an affidavit claiming they cannot obtain photo ID because they are either poor or cannot have their photo taken for religious reasons. Additionally, the voter cannot have been required or challenged to fill out a provisional ballot in the past.

¹⁵ "Voter ID: State Requirements." NCSL Home. National Conference of State Legislators. Web. 08 Mar. 2011. <<http://www.ncsl.org/default.aspx?tabid=16602>>.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Persily, Nathaniel. "Vote Fraud in the Eye of the Beholder: The Role of Public Opinion in the Challenge to Voter Identification Requirements." NELLCO Legal Scholarship Repository. Columbia Law School, 21 Feb. 2008. Web.

¹⁸ Hershey, M. R. "What We Know about Voter-ID Laws, Registration, and Turnout." Political Science and Politics. Cambridge Univ Press, 2009. Web.

¹⁹ A Report on Photo ID for Voting Purposes. Rep. ISACA Photo ID Exploratory Committee, 25 Jan. 2011. Web. <http://www.iowaauditors.org/index_files/ISACAVoterIDReport020211final.pdf>.

Table 1²⁰

Turnout of the Voter Eligible Population (2008 US Presidential Election)

State	Voter Eligible Population
Minnesota	78%
Wisconsin	72%
New Hampshire	71%
Maine	71%
Colorado	70%
Iowa	70%
Michigan	68%
Alaska	68%
Oregon	68%
Virginia	68%
Connecticut	67%
Maryland	67%
Missouri	67%
New Jersey	67%
Vermont	67%
Florida	67%
Montana	67%
Ohio	67%
Delaware	67%
Washington	67%
North Carolina	66%
Massachusetts	66%
Wyoming	65%
North Dakota	64%
South Dakota	64%
Idaho	64%
Pennsylvania	64%
Nebraska	63%
Illinois	63%
Kansas	62%
Rhode Island	62%
DC	62%
New Mexico	62%
Georgia	62%
Alabama	61%
Mississippi	61%
California	61%
Louisiana	61%
Indiana	59%
Nevada	59%
South Carolina	59%
New York	58%
Kentucky	58%
Tennessee	57%
Oklahoma	56%
Arizona	55%
Utah	55%
Texas	54%
Arkansas	53%
West Virginia	51%
Hawaii	51%

²⁰ United States Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2008.

Notes

Table 1 compares total turnout across states. States are organized from highest to lowest based on their Voter Eligible Population (VEP) turnout percentage.

The states are colored according to the voter ID laws they implement. The colors are as followed:

- **Tan: Photo ID Required States.**
- **Green: Any ID Required States**
- **Blue: No ID Required States.**

VEP: Votes for the Presidential Election divided by the number of citizens that are eligible to vote (e.g. excludes minors, felons, non-citizens, etc.).

This report was prepared in May 2011 by the Iowa Policy Research Organization (IPRO), a nonpartisan public policy undergraduate research group at the University of Iowa. For additional research on this or other issues, please visit our website at <http://www.uiowa.edu/~ipro/> or contact us at rene-rocha@uiowa.edu.